

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

121441Z Dec 01

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ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	DINT-00	DODE-00	DOE-00
	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	EUR-00	FAAE-00	FBIE-00	VC-00
	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	LAB-01	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01
	NSAE-00	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PC-01	PM-00	PRS-00
	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	IRM-00	SSO-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00
	IIP-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00
	SWCI-00	/008W					

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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0513
INFO NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L HARARE 003688

SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR JENDAYI FRAZER
LONDON FOR CHARLES GURNEY
PARIS FOR CHARLES NEARY
NAIROBI FOR TERRY PFLAUMER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/12/11

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: MUGABE SAYS ZIMBABWE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION WILL
BE IN MARCH AND OBSERVERS WILL BE INVITED

CLASSIFIED BY POLITICAL OFFICER TODD FAULK FOR REASONS:
1.5 (B) AND (D).

[1](#). (U) PRESIDENT MUGABE TOLD VISITING SADC MINISTERS
AND A NIGERIAN NGO IN HARARE THAT THE PRESIDENTIAL
ELECTION WILL TAKE PLACE IN MARCH 2002, ACCORDING TO THE
GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED PRINT AND BROADCAST MEDIA. MUGABE
DID NOT PROVIDE SPECIFIC DATES, AS THESE WILL BE SET
LATER BY THE REGISTRAR-GENERAL. MUGABE ALSO REPORTEDLY
STATED THAT REPRESENTATIVES FROM SADC, THE AFRICAN
UNION, COMMONWEALTH, ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN
STATES (ECOWAS), AND INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE EU (BUT
NOT THE EU AS A BLOC), WOULD BE INVITED TO OBSERVE THE
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION. MUGABE'S STATEMENT DID NOT
INCLUDE AN INVITATION FOR AMERICAN AND BRITISH
OBSERVERS. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, MUGABE BRIEFED
THE SADC MINISTERS ON THE "UNITED STATES SANCTIONS BILL"
AND OTHER "ILLEGAL" ACTIONS BY BRITAIN AND THE EU
AGAINST ZIMBABWE. "I WILL HAVE SOME DIFFICULTY IN
INVITING SOME WHITE MEN HERE. I WOULD RATHER INVITE THE
ASIANS OR CARIBBEANS ... OF COURSE THERE ARE SOME GOOD
COUNTRIES WITHIN THE [EU] AND THOSE WE SHALL INVITE TO
SEND OBSERVERS IN THEIR OWN RIGHT," MUGABE IS QUOTED AS
SAYING.

NEXT STEPS IN ELECTORAL PROCESS

[2](#). (C) MUGABE'S PRONOUNCEMENT OF A MARCH ELECTION JUST
DAYS BEFORE THE ANNUAL ZANU-PF CONFERENCE IS DUE TO
BEGIN SIGNALS HIS INTENTION TO USE THE ANNUAL GATHERING
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AS THE JUMPING OFF POINT OF HIS OFFICIAL CANDIDACY.
SPECIFIC DATES FOR THE ELECTION ARE LIKELY TO BE
ANNOUNCED SOON AFTER THE CONFERENCE, BUT MUST BE
GAZETTED BY THE REGISTRAR-GENERAL BETWEEN JANUARY 2 AND
10, 2002, ACCORDING TO THE ELECTORAL ACT. AT THE SAME
TIME, THE REGISTRAR-GENERAL CALLS FOR PRESIDENTIAL
NOMINATIONS TO BE SUBMITTED TO A NOMINATION COURT, WHICH
CAN RECEIVE THEM UNTIL JANUARY 31. THE LAST POLLING DAY
PERMITTED UNDER THE ELECTORAL ACT IS MARCH 17, ACCORDING
TO THE LEGAL RESOURCES FOUNDATION, A WELL-RESPECTED
ZIMBABWEAN NGO SPECIALIZING IN LEGAL ISSUES. THERE MUST
BE AT LEAST A TWO-WEEK PERIOD BETWEEN THE POLLING DAYS
AND THE END OF THE PRESIDENT'S TERM, WHICH OCCURS ON
MARCH 31.

COMMENT

[3](#). (C) MUGABE'S PRONOUNCEMENT OF A MARCH ELECTION COMES
AS NO GREAT SURPRISE. MUGABE APPEARS INTENT ON STICKING
TO THE ELECTION SCHEDULE SPELLED OUT IN THE CONSTITUTION
AND ELECTORAL ACT IN AN ATTEMPT TO SHOW CRITICS HE IS A
"TRUE DEMOCRAT." BY OUR RECKONING, THE ELECTION IS

LIKELY TO FALL ON THE WEEKEND OF MARCH 16-17, WHICH
WOULD GIVE MUGABE THE MAXIMUM TIME TO ORGANIZE HIS
SUPPORTERS AND PLAN FOR ELECTORAL CONTINGENCIES.
ZIMBABWE'S RAINY SEASON SHOULD BE WANING BY THE MIDDLE
OF MARCH, WHICH REDUCES THE CHANCES THAT FLOODS AND
WASHED-OUT BRIDGES COULD KEEP MUGABE'S PREDOMINANTLY
RURAL SUPPORTERS AWAY FROM THE POLLING BOOTHS. THE
TIMING MAY ALSO DEPEND ON LOOMING FOOD SHORTAGES. THE
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PERIOD OF GREATEST CONCERN NOW APPEARS TO BE MARCH
THROUGH MAY. WE NOTE FOR THE RECORD THAT THE U.S. DID
NOT NUMBER AMONG THOSE COUNTRIES THAT WILL BE INVITED TO
SEND ELECTION OBSERVERS. END COMMENT.

SULLIVAN

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